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To: Members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee

From: American Lung Association

Date: February 23, 2009

Re: SB 930 An Act Concerning the Cigarette Tax, the Tobacco Tax and the Alcohol Beverages Tax

My name is Margaret LaCroix and I am Vice President of Marketing and Communications for the American Lung Association. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of SB 930 An Act Concerning the Cigarette Tax, the Tobacco Tax and the Alcohol Beverages Tax. The ALA favors using a portion of this new revenue for providing smoking cessation coverage for Medicaid recipients and to fund the Quitline.

We know that there is no more effective intervention to reduce smoking rates than to increase the price of cigarettes. This is especially effective in reducing youth smoking rates and preventing others from starting. In fact, for each ten percent price increase, tobacco use drops by about seven percent for youths and four percent for adults. While we support the tax increase, funding programs to help smokers quit must be a priority.

In addition, taxing all tobacco products at the same rate helps eliminate incentives for youths to start using a less expensive tobacco product. Cheaper products provide a gateway to tobacco use.

Supporting tobacco prevention and treatment programs with a portion of the funds raised by the tax increase is an investment in the reduction of future health care costs. We know that for every one dollar spent on prevention and cessation, \$14 is saved on health care costs.

We urge support for this measure and stand ready to assist in any way.

For more than 100 years, the American Lung Association and Lung Association affiliates throughout the United States have worked together in the fight against lung disease.

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SMOKEFREE KIDS

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One Breath at a Time*

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